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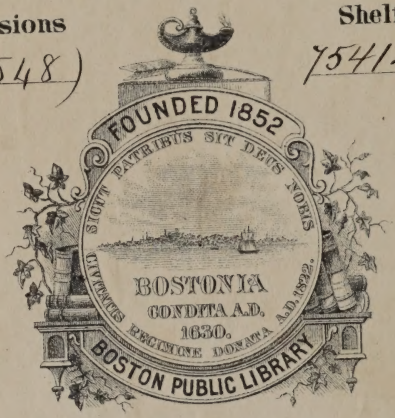

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Thomas B. Wyman.

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ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE TEACHERS AND FRIENDS

OF THE

SUNDAY SCHOOL

IN THE

TWELFTH CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY,

Boston.

At their Sixth Anniversary, March 29, 1833.

BY ONE OF THE SUPERINTENDENTS.

Lewis Glover Pray

Published by Request.

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1833.

ADDRESS.

We are assembled, my friends, to notice the sixth Anniversary of the Sunday school in this Society; an occasion apparently unimportant in itself, but one of deep interest to the teachers of the school; and one, as I think, that should be of still greater interest to those who are parents in the Society, and to the community at large. For what subject is there in the whole compass of human science of more deep and practical utility than the science of morals in connexion with human happiness? In the whole range of human knowledge, what is there so vitally important to our present interests and well-being, as a knowledge of those eternal truths which have been made known to us by the teachings and example of Jesus Christ? In the wide field of human hopes, what is there which concerns us so much, and affects us so deeply, as the hopes inspired by the gospel, and which hath promised to the creature, the immortality of its great, wise, and beneficent Creator? To teach these, is the purpose of the Sunday school. To teach these to the children of this Parish, is the purpose of the Association which it is my privilege, this evening, to address! How many recollections, feelings, hopes, crowd upon the mind as we recur to what has been,—what is, —and what may be,—in reference to our cherished school! Let us then occupy the time which we have devoted to this

occasion in considering the appropriate topics embraced in its *past history*, its *present condition*, and its *future prospects*.

The history of this school is embraced in the compass of a very few years. Indeed the history of Sunday schools from their first institution includes a period of little more than half a century. In 1782, Robert Raikes, that ever-memorable name, which will go down to the latest posterity associated with the history of Sunday schools, originated and established the first institution of the kind in Gloucester, England. I award to Raikes this distinguished honor, not because he was the first, perhaps, to cause children to be religiously instructed at school, on the Sabbath day, but because he was the first who, by his intelligence and zeal, gave these schools a "local habitation and a name," communicated their value to the world, and with a prophetic spirit anticipated from their effects a brighter era in the condition and prospects of the human race. And why should he not? He had witnessed such a deplorable profanation of the Sabbath day, by a band of little wretches who infested the suburbs of his native city, that, to use the simple but expressive language of the narrator, "it would convey to any serious mind an idea of hell rather than any other place." But in a very short period after he had established these schools, such a change had taken place, such a quiet imparted to the scene, such an absence of all vulgar and profane language, that it was remarked by a woman who lived in one of the lanes where they were, "that it was quite a heaven upon Sundays, compared to what it used to be." And why should he not? He knew that in every place, human nature was the same, and that if in this instance Sunday schools had regenerated a few, he well might prophecy that they would regenerate and improve the condition of society, in the same degree, whenever and wherever they might be established. Accordingly he gave publicity to his benevolent design, and it soon spread to the metropolis of that great kingdom, and from thence, in the short period of fifty years, to almost every part of the civilized world.

But, if the period is so short since the first institution of these schools, it is much shorter since their first establishment in this

country. The honor of this act is contended for by as many of our cities and parishes, perhaps, as was the birth-place of the renowned poet of ancient Greece. But whether we award it to Portsmouth or Philadelphia, to Beverly or Boston, to the North Church or the West Church, certain it is, that it does not take us back to a period more remote than 1812. And yet more certain is it, as I apprehend, that the first Sunday school established in this country, and *known as such*, was the Salem Street School in 1815; from which time they were rapidly extended by one class of Christians to every city and to most of the large towns in North America. The manner, however, in which they were conducted by their earliest friends created such a strong prejudice against them, in the minds of liberal Christians, that it was not till the year 1822 or 1823 that a Sunday school, *as such*, was instituted and conducted by any of our denomination in this city, or the United States.

In 1824 this church was dedicated to the worship of Almighty God. Go back with me, my friends, to the close of that year when our beloved Pastor* was inducted to the duties of that office, the discharge of which has been to us such a source of spiritual improvement and unmingled happiness. His ministry commences with the year 1825. In a few months afterward we find him in this vestry, at that time but a third of its present size, assembling around him on the Sabbath noon a small group of little children, assisted by two or three others, imparting to them religious instruction. Most of those who were then engaged as teachers had scarcely seen or heard of a Sunday school. Their efforts, therefore, were without much method, practical knowledge, or any very distinct object. But, imperfect and irregular as were these efforts, they were nevertheless the germ of the present school. They led to an examination of the subject;—to visits to schools already established; especially to the Hancock, whose public exhibitions were then exerting such a wide influence among our Christian friends. Prejudices were thereby removed, and so much light obtained that measures were early taken to organize a regular Sunday school in this Society. The first

* Rev. Samuel Barrett.

meeting for this purpose was held at the house of one of the Parish, on the evening of the 21st of March, 1827. On the 30th—that is, the last Friday evening of the same month, corresponding with the present evening, rules and regulations were adopted, and the organization of this school completed. In recurring to this period, the strongest emotions are awakened. These meetings were of peculiar interest; and their influence has not been lost to the present hour,—and probably will never be! Our Pastor was of the number; and, as introductory to the purposes of the meetings, he laid before us the duties and qualifications of the Sunday school teacher. The standard was a high one; and well do I remember the sensations produced by those remarks. Most of us had come to the meeting to engage in what we supposed an easy and a common task; one that required but little knowledge, less time, and no sacrifice. But when the office was set forth in its true light, as one of high responsibility, requiring much intelligence, knowledge and preparation, and an example corresponding to what was taught;—there were none present but were humbled in view of their deficiences. One said, I remember, if not more than one, 'if this it is to be a Sunday school teacher I am wholly unfit and must decline the duty.' But, nevertheless, when the school was assembled on the following Sunday for the first time, she was among the number, became one of the best of our teachers, remained with us the longest, and exerted to the last a delightful influence over her pupils and the school. This was the first Sunday in April, 1827. The school was assembled in the body of the Church. Forty pupils only were present on that day, with twelve teachers; but they rapidly increased, so that in October of the same year, there were upwards of one hundred connected with the school, while the average attendance was eighty, with twenty-three teachers. In the spring of 1828 the vestry was enlarged, and in July, of the same year, the school was removed to it. This incident gave a new impulse to the school. It brought it under the more immediate oversight of the superintendents, the children into closer contact with their teachers, and

thereby the power of sympathy was communicated to, and influenced the whole establishment. From that time the increase was rapid, and so well has it been sustained that for the five years which have since elapsed, the average attendance has been more than one hundred, with upwards of thirty teachers.

The whole number of children which has been connected with the school from its first establishment, so far as can now be ascertained, is more than four hundred. Many of them have remained with us from the first to the last. Some of them have become teachers in the school. All of them have been more or less under the instruction and influence of the teachers with whose classes they were connected. Can we recall this fact, and not feel the importance of this institution? Can it be that these little beings, in the plastic state of their existence, have been taught by affectionate teachers their relation to God, to one another, and an eternal life, in vain? Can it be that they will grow up and mingle with society and not feel the power and influence of these teachings? Can it be that they will not be strengthened by them to resist the allurements of vice, and overcome the temptations to which they will every where be exposed? Will they not, in fact, possess some of those great principles which will save them in prosperity, from its intoxication and consequent shipwreck, and in sorrow and adversity 'prove an anchor to their souls, sure and steadfast?' Yes, my friends, and more than this; these feelings and principles will be extended by them to others, and thus the labors of the present generation will be transmitted to succeeding ones, who will rise up and pronounce a blessing upon the earliest of their religious instructers! Already your little army has gone forth! They are at this moment, by their teaching and example, diffusing those blessed influences which they received while under the instructions of this school. Go on, then, teacher! increase this holy band! And as you feel, week after week, that you have impressed some new and powerful truth upon the mind of one pupil, be conscious, and let hat consciousness be your reward, that it is not that pupil alone whose mind you have influenced and controlled for its

good, but that through its instrumentality you will have sent that truth down to other generations, blessing and to bless, even to the remotest period of time.

The whole number of teachers which have been connected with the school is seventy-seven. In running the eye over this list, we are forcibly reminded of the mutability of our present condition. Perhaps no Sunday school has been more successful than ours in the constancy and perseverance of its teachers. Indeed too much praise cannot be given for the influence which they have exerted over the school in these particulars. And yet of the whole number who were present at the opening of the school, but two remain, if we except the superintendents. Of those who joined it the first year, but five are now connected with it; and more than one half of our present number have not been associated with us more than two years. Forty-five have either left or been taken away, and thirty-two remain. If we ask for the former, we shall find a few of them, in distant cities and states, engaged in the same good cause, with that zeal which was lighted up or strengthened within this cherished circle. Some of them are in the midst of us superintending other schools, or engaged in new and to them paramount interests. But for a few, shall I say a little band?—six, I believe, in all,—for *them* we look in vain. If we ask, where are they? alas! it is echo alone that answers us, *Where?* How precious to us is the memory of these! They were kind,—they were faithful,—they were useful! But the tomb has closed over them, and they have gone to their reward! As we meditate, their blessed images rise up before us—we see them radiant with the light of heaven, and we can but interrogate them in the language of affection and truth,—

Friends of the young, whose toils are o'er,
Taste ye in heaven a purer bliss,
Or one that now ye cherish more,
Than that which comes from days like this?*

* The names of those who have been teachers, and who have deceased since the establishment of the school, are these, viz. Mr. John Holman, Miss Mary Ann Perkins, Mr. James Perkins, Miss S. E. Lovejoy, Mr. Robert R. Howard, and Miss Sarah A. Freeman.

The history of our Sunday school would be incomplete were I not to mention our teachers' meetings. They have been held monthly with great regularity, and attended by a large proportion of the teachers. They have been occupied in the discussion of the most important questions connected with education, morality and religion; with the investigation of Scripture assisted by our Pastor, and in promoting the general welfare of our own and other Sunday schools. The importance of these meetings cannot be too greatly magnified. They have been the means, as I believe, of great personal improvement; they have formed a bond of sympathy and affection, which, carried by the teacher to his class, has given harmony and effect to our modes of instruction, and led to the best results in the order and improvement of the school. These meetings indeed are the great central principle around which revolve all the minor orbs of the system, receiving from it light and heat, and thence imparting strength and beauty to the whole.

Thus much, my friends, for the past history of our school. I now recur for a moment to its *present condition.* In regard to this, I may venture to say, that, under the blessing and providence of God, it is one of great prosperity. We have proofs of it in its external as well as its internal condition. The external proofs of it are in the number of its teachers, its pupils, and means of instruction. At the present moment we have thirty-four teachers; twelve male, and twenty-two female teachers; beside the superintendent and two assistants. Of children there is on our list the names of more than two hundred, of which there is a constant average attendance of one hundred and thirty; varying, according to weather and other circumstances, from one hundred to one hundred and fifty. Beside these, we have ample means of instruction. The Benevolent Association connected with this Society, have always furnished us with sufficient funds to provide a constant supply of manuals, and to extend, from year to year, the interest and value of our Juvenile Library. But while we are thus prosperous in our external condition, without something more, it

would be like a body without a soul. Let us then look at our internal condition. And what do we see? What a spectacle is presented to us Sabbath after Sabbath! At the sound of the well-known bell, group after group are seen wending their way to this place, consecrated to religious instruction! Their step is a hasty and a cheerful one! Time was indeed when they would loiter about the porch, engage in the sportive tricks of childhood, and exhibit a wearied and irksome deportment. But it is not so now. They repair to their class with the utmost alacrity;—pleasure or delight is expressed in the sparkling eye, as they greet their teacher. They sing! and what melody is in their voices! They engage in prayer! and how reverential is the manner and the tone! They are taught! every eye is fixed! You feel, as you address them, that they take an interest in what you say. A silence prevails more expressive than words, as the thrilling incident or the moral and religious truth is explained or enforced. Cast your eye then over the school, and you will see these little ones gathered into groups, hanging upon the lips of their teacher, drinking in the wisdom which is imparted thence by their religious instructer and friend! What a scene! Mind acting upon mind! heart upon heart! The teacher growing more wise and pure by the effort which he is making to impart the wisdom of God to the purest and most blessed of all his visible works! The child, the innocent, the immortal child, becoming wiser and stronger to resist the impurities and follies that are constantly pressing around him, by the example and teaching of his elder friend. Follow them to their homes, their day-schools or their sports, and you will find that the influence of this hour is not lost upon them. You will find that the impressions which they have received at this place, modifies or controls their conduct: that their obedience at home is more perfect; their intercourse with one another more kind; their language more refined and reverential; and their companions chosen with more judgment and care. I am now treating of the present, and must therefore leave it to your imagnations to trace the result of these principles and impressions when they shall

have entered upon the great theatre of the world. But the scene that is before us is a delightful one, and well may we pause to contemplate it. If

> "There is a time when moments flow
> More happily than all beside,"——

it is, when a silent spectator, casting his eye over such a school, sees the whole, the teacher and the taught, engaged, interested, zealous even in imparting or receiving divine truth and the knowledge of duty; in cultivating some of the best affections of their nature; and this scene interrupted only by the hymn of praise, which ascends from innocent lips and delighted hearts, preparatory to another and higher service in the courts of God. If this picture be just, as it is intended to be, every one can determine for himself the present condition of our school. May God in his infinite wisdom continue and increase its prosperity.

The *future prospects* of this, as of all other Sunday schools, is a subject of transcendent importance, and to which I invite your earnest consideration in what remains of this address. Notwithstanding there are some elements in the constitution of these schools which are indicative of instability and decay, such as the *voluntary* character of the talent and labor which they require; and the *gratuitous* nature of the benefits which they impart, and which consequently are never so highly appreciated; yet there are other principles connected with them, which are as animating as they are indestructible, and which throw over our future prospects a halo of permanent and indescribable lustre. These principles it will now be my purpose to develope, that you may be enabled to feel what are the duties which are obligatory on all of us, in connexion with these institutions. And, first, of TEACHERS. The principle in relation to teachers, on which we found our future prospects of success, is that intuitive principle, which leads us to feel it to be a duty to impart to others that which we know ourselves—especially if the knowledge is of a character to affect permanently the happiness of our race. I say intuitive;—for, as it seems to me, its germ is in every human breast. The infinitely

wise and great Creator seems to have implanted this beneficent principle within us, to the end that his intelligent offspring in all time, might not only bless but be blessed, by the exercise of some of their noblest faculties. If we go back to the earliest periods of time, we shall see the necessity of this principle, more strongly, than by dwelling on the present. Then, there were no means or medium of communication with successive generations, but through the living patriarchs of the race. Their lives, if I may so speak, were miraculously extended, that the knowledge and experience of accumulated ages might be concentrated in those, who, by the force of this inherent principle, would communicate them to subsequent generations; and they, in their turn, hand them down in the progressive scale of human existence. Patriarchs, lawgivers and prophets, actuated by this principle, appeared upon the stage of action, taught the ages in which they lived the great truths of heaven-descended wisdom, and thus gave them a transmission and perpetuity which no other means could have effected. "In the fulness of time" the Great Teacher came, and with this principle wonderfully developed in his own mind, and inspired also to a degree beyond that of any other human being, went about not only "doing good," but *teaching*,—aye, TEACHING "the way, the truth and the life," that he might enlighten the mental darkness that was all around him, and, by the power of truth, save, sanctify and redeem the family of man. These truths have given new vigor to this principle in every other mind where they have been truly and deeply felt. We may trace the effects of it in every age, and in every direction. Martyrs have died under its guiding influence. Missionaries have encountered every danger, disease, and even death itself, that they might act out, and up to this great principle of their immortal natures. It was this, that moved the soul of Howard to his great enterprise of benevolence; and which led, in recent times, to those singularly disinterested efforts recorded in the lives of Oberlin and Neff. This principle is with us still. And I address myself to *you*, Sunday school teacher; and ask if *you* did not feel the im-

pulse of this principle when you first entered the Sunday school! I appeal to *you*, if it has not been increased, strengthened, elevated, as the boundaries of your knowledge have become enlarged, and your duties more familiar to you. I appeal to *you*, if, as you have sought for truth to enlighten the minds of your little charge, remembering the promise that he that "*asketh, receiveth,*" you have not felt light, as it were, from heaven, infused into your mind, and from thence received a new motive and a stronger desire to communicate it to their thirsty and longing souls! Then, teacher, be faithful to your high vocation. Cultivate this feeling, this noble principle within you. Let it lead you frequently, to the source of all wisdom in prayer. Let it lead you to the primal and most illuminated expositors of this wisdom—the great book of Revelation, and to its elder brother, the wide, the extended book of Nature. And when you have studied these, and thereby become familiar with your own nature and duties, you will feel the full extent of that obligation which is imposed upon you to supply, in the most engaging and interesting manner, that deep want which exists in the hearts of the young. Forget not, above all things, to develope and cultivate the same feeling within their little minds; so that when you shall have passed from the school and from this scene of earthly duty, they may be prepared, and eager to supply your place. One of the firmest of my hopes in the future prosperity of this and every other Sunday school is founded upon this indestructible and immutable principle of our nature, a principle as yet but imperfectly developed; but which is as a rock deeply imbedded in it, and whose apex is towering to the heavens. Christianity, as it becomes better understood, will give to it a greater prominency and bolder relief. It will be to it, like the chisel of the sculptor, cutting away piece by piece from the misshapen mass, until it shall bring to light and beauty the exquisite proportions of its divine original. Teachers, I address myself to you! be not unfaithful to this great and important principle in your natures!

The next principle upon which I rely, for the future success of this and of all other Sunday schools, is the principle of

Parental love. Yes, parental love, that word with which is associated so many of our fondest thoughts and dearest recollections, and yet, than which, there are few more frequently or sadly abused. The principle of *true* parental love, as I apprehend, is one that is most deeply implanted in the human heart. But are we to understand by it, only that feeling which prompts the parent to preserve the existence of its offspring? Or that scarcely higher impulse, which feels satisfied when it has provided for it that instruction, by which it may supply itself, when the care of the parent is withdrawn? And yet I fear that these are the most general definitions which are now given, or at least the highest sense in which we too frequently understand, the words *parental love.* But is this their true, their only meaning? Oh, no, my friends;—there is something deeper and more divine than this in the principle for which I contend. Would you know what it is? Go with me, then, to the dwelling of a young, but true-souled mother! We may seek her in the princely palace, or the humble hut. But there she is!—young, pure, fond, and devoted. The shades of night are gathering thickly upon the walls of her dwelling. Upon her knee is seated the object of her strongest affection, her first-born child. It has lisped but for once, perhaps, the name of Father, in recognition of its earthly parent. And now, its mother, its unsophisticated mother, true to the strongest principle of her nature, as she is about to hush it to its nightly rest, has joined its little hands, and in the words of the greatest of its benefactors, has taught it to say "Our Father, who art in heaven!" But that I may be yet better understood, in regard to the principle which it is my purpose to illustrate, take one more example. Follow that father to his little garden. In a corner of it, which he has designedly selected, see him, with his finger, writing, in its rich and fruitful soil, the initials which compose the name of an only son, but six years of age. Those little furrows he sows with garden-cresses. He carefully covers them, and smooths the ground. In a few days, that darling child comes running to him, exclaiming, 'Father! my name is growing in the garden!' At first, the

father affects to laugh, and would seem to disregard it. But the child continues to importune, nor ceases until he has brought him to the spot. Well, said the father, as they came to the place, I see it is so, but is it not mere chance? No, answered the boy, some one must have *contrived* it. The father *had now gained his point.* Observe, said he, those beautiful flowers, these lofty trees, that orb in yonder sky, your own frame, so wonderfully and regularly made; do not they give evidence of contrivance and design? Could *these* have come by chance? In this way the child was easily and effectually taught the existence of a great first cause—God;—and in such a way that he never forgot it,—for this anecdote is from real life,—and in such a manner that it had a striking influence on his thoughts and actions to the latest period of his life. Now these, I apprehend, are exemplifications of *true* parental love. Nature speaks through them in a tone which cannot be misunderstood. They teach us that a desire for the *happiness* of its offspring,—not its mere animal existence,—its well-being in relation to things of time and sense,—but its true happiness by the early cultivation of its MORAL AND RELIGIOUS NATURE,—is the dictate of every parent's heart. This, I say, is the natural dictate; and, if it were not obstructed, would grow with the growth of the child, and would lead to all, and more than all, than is now aimed at or attained by the Sunday School. But the cares and duties of the mother are soon multiplied; the father is deeply immersed in business; and both are early led to give over their children to that course of instruction, which, by some pleasing accomplishments and mental acquisitions, will prepare them for the pursuits and stations to which they are respectively destined. In this way, the principle of parental love becomes vitiated, misdirected, overlaid. You may perceive the consequences of this, in that want of reverence, which exists amongst the young, and that impiety and scepticism, which are so rife at the present day. You feel it in the eager love of pleasure, of distinction, of wealth, which is so characteristic of the passing age. But, nevertheless, the principle is not lost. Though neglected or abused, it remains in every

parent's breast. Touch but this chord, and it gives back at once, and always, a deep response. Touch but this chord, and the deep want, the great necessity, of a moral and religious cultivation, for every human soul, is at once felt and acknowledged. Parents are tremblingly alive to the moral safety of their children. There is nothing they desire so much as that their children may be saved from the "evil there is in the world." Touch but this chord, then, and nature teacheth them that, in this regard, there is a duty to be performed, and that there is but one way and one name given under heaven, by which it can be well performed, and the object effectually secured. Parents, I address myself to *you!* and ask if it is not this principle, this voice of parental love, that prompts you, at the close of each returning Sabbath, to gather your little family around the domestic hearth, and to teach them,—irregularly and imperfectly it may be,—but yet to teach them, as far as you may, those moral and religious truths, which glitter as diamonds on the page of Holy Writ, and which, alone, as you believe, can guide them safely through the mazy paths of life. Is it not this, which imparts such an interest to the Sunday school, and which leads you spontaneously to bless the hand that would take your little ones onward and upward to the fount of present happiness and everlasting life? But, be not deceived. The Sunday school cannot flourish without your aid. The teacher must not, nor can he, release you from all your responsibility; nor deprive you wholly of the highest pleasure which belongs to you as parents, the pleasure of unfolding some of the noblest faculties of created intelligence. Parents, I address myself to *you!* For a moment, cast your eyes upward. Recall to your mind that Great Being, who is the Father of us all. The great purpose of his moral government is to educate, in the infancy of their being, the whole race of man. The system is on a vast and magnificent plan; and the process is the process of ages. But the principle, by which it is guided, is parental love; and if we might ascribe to any one cause the source of his supreme and perfect happiness, it would be to the exercise of this principle

directed to our moral and religious cultivation, and which secures to us the great end of our being, unmixed and permanent happiness. Parents, here is your great exemplar. The germ of the same principle is in your hearts. Cultivate it; enlighten it; give it greater energy and wider scope. One of the strongest of my hopes in the future prosperity of Sunday schools, is founded in the belief that this inherent principle of our natures is to be yet further developed. The value of a moral and religious education is to be yet better understood, and more highly appreciated. Parents are yet to feel that the Sunday school is not only the best friend of their children, but their own best friend. They will then cherish it. They will aid its purposes. They will learn that, while the seeds of piety and virtue may be sown there, broad-cast, in the hearts of their children, the beams of parental love must vivify, sustain and mature them, if they would have them spring up, blossom, and bear much and rich fruit. Then, when the child returns from school—when he repeats, or desires to repeat, the lesson of his teacher—when he solicits further explanation—and asks of the parent, aid, that he may the better understand the subject which is to occupy the happy hour of the coming Sabbath, —then will you hear a voice within you, irresistible in its power, which will lead you to listen, to gratify, to assist your child, and, at the same time, to bless his teacher, to whom you will constantly send him, for more full and perfect illustrations. Then will the Institution flourish. Every successive age will add new strength to its walls, and it will rise a majestic and cherished pile, the admiration and hope of a Christian world! Parents! fail not of fidelity to this important, this vital trust!

There is but one other principle to which I shall advert, and upon which I rely for the future prosperity of this and of all other Sunday schools: it is the principle, existing in the community, of an *enlightened patriotism.* Intelligence and Virtue, as we know, are the two great pillars upon which rest Republican Institutions. If one of these be wanting, the building must topple to the ground. You may rear the column inscribed to Intelligence ever so high; but, beautiful as it is, without its

sister column, Virtue, it is weak and powerless. United with it, and the floods may come and the winds blow, but the edifice will stand, for it is founded upon a rock. The enlightened patriotism of our Fathers led them, at an early period, to make a noble provision for the one, but as time has disclosed to us, to the neglect, in some degree, of the other. Evidences have long been accumulating to force a conviction upon the public mind, that our body politic is not wholly sound; and a strong desire has consequently been excited to find a remedy, which, infused into the system, would expel from it the disease. This remedy, we are beginning to learn, is moral and religious principle,—without which, there is but little security for our invaluable political institutions. We are fast learning that this momentous power must be imparted in the infancy of life, before the avenues through which it can only pass, shall be closed up by the delusions and corruptions of the world. The Sunday school now comes in and addresses itself to the reason and understanding of men, as the great engine by which this principle may be diffused, and its salutary, saving, and permanent effects, secured. The strength which this conviction has already obtained, is seen in their rapid extension, and the strong hold, which they have on public favor, here and elsewhere. It is but fifty years since they were first established in England. And, at this moment, they have in that country four thousand schools, one hundred thousand teachers, and a million and a half of children connected with them. The same is true, and to a greater extent, comparatively, in regard to America. No sooner are they submitted for consideration to our liberal and patriotic citizens, than they are approved, established, and multiplied, almost beyond the power of thought. But eighteen years have elapsed since their first institution here, and yet so rapid has been their extension, that there are now seventy thousand teachers in these schools employed in communicating moral principle, religious sentiment and knowledge, to the minds of six hundred thousand of our children. From these facts we may infer that public sentiment is aroused and active in regard to this momentous subject. But it must be yet more

awakened if we would carry forward to its highest perfection, our free, elastic, and happy form of government. I address myself, then, to you, citizens! If you would continue to live freemen, and transmit to your posterity, and to future generations, the great inheritance, the birthright of liberty,—cultivate within you the principle of an enlightened and holy patriotism. Infuse into the public mind the necessity of virtue, of religion, as well as of intelligence, to the security and welfare of your country, and nourish those institutions by your example, by personal service as teachers, and by all the means by which this can be most effectually done. One of the strongest of my hopes for the future prosperity of this, and of all other Sunday schools, is founded upon the strength of this principle in the heart of every good citizen. I address myself, then, to you! Be faithful to this important trust, and our schools and our country are safe.

My friends, the purpose for which we are assembled, is that, while we celebrate the Anniversary of our Association, we may, at the same time, warm our own and the hearts of others in the great and good cause in which we are engaged. We have seen what is our past history and present condition. We have seen that our future prospects are in the hands of teachers, parents, and the community. We have seen that there are inherent principles in our nature, which, if wisely and assiduously cultivated, will lead us, in our respective spheres of life, to such a discharge of duty, in connexion with them, that they cannot fail to be sustained, multiplied and ennobled. Let us, then, renewedly address ourselves to the fulfilment of our high vocations. The destiny of immortal souls are confided to our care. It depends much upon us whether they shall take the 'narrow path' that guideth to peace and permanent happiness; or that 'broad way' which leadeth down to death! A few years, and those who are our children or pupils will become the busy actors in the great drama of life;—the teachers by example and precept, according as we shall have done our duty, either of that which shall bless themselves and their country, or of that which shall corrupt and destroy both. Raise

the curtain, and the great future rises to our view! Ages are to be influenced for good or for evil, as we shall now act,—aye, eternity! Yes, my friends, ETERNITY. For we, and they, and all the succeeding races and generations, who shall follow after us in this pageantry of life, must all pass away! The parent and the child; the teacher and the taught; and all they who shall make up the community in every period of time. Happy, happy, will it be for us, if, when we meet, as assuredly we must, when "mortal shall have put on immortality," we can look back to this period with joy and satisfaction, and shall hear the voice of our ascended Master, addressing to each of us that gracious and all-glorious welcome, "WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT, ENTER THOU INTO THE JOY OF THY LORD!"

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